

VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

TRADE SHOW ASSISTANCE

GRANTS

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS – FISCAL YEAR 2023

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM)'s Trade Show Assistance Grants provide Vermont agricultural and forestry businesses with funds to identify, plan, exhibit, and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state trade shows or virtual shows targeting out-of-state buyers. These matching grants can mitigate the financial risks associated with exhibiting at trade shows, which provide excellent opportunities to network with wholesale buyers.

KEY DATES

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS RELEASE DATE: December 1, 2022

APPLICATION OPENS: December 15, 2022 at 12:00 PM

APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 31, 2023 at 11:59 PM

AWARD NOTIFICATIONS: March 1, 2023

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CONTACT INFORMATION

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets staff are available to assist applicants during State of Vermont business hours, Monday–Friday, 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM. Please note that immediate assistance may not be available shortly before deadlines.

WEBGRANTS

Applications for this program are accepted through the [WebGrants](#) grants management system.

REGISTRATION

New users must complete the [WebGrants Registration Form](#). Registrations are typically processed within two business days. Please register for an account well in advance of the application deadline.

SUBMISSION POLICY

It is the applicant's responsibility to follow all application instructions, including the submission dates and times included in this Request for Applications. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets will accept the last validated submission through the grants management system, WebGrants, prior to the posted deadline as the final and sole acceptable submission of an application.

We cannot accept submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline, barring exceptional circumstances. WebGrants will prevent applications from being submitted after the posted deadline.

SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When you have successfully submitted your application, you will be redirected to an **Application Submitted Confirmation** page with an Application ID number. You will also receive a confirmation email.

For more information on how to apply, please see the [WebGrants Application Guide](#).

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

I.I PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets' Trade Show Assistance Grants provide Vermont agricultural and forestry businesses with funds to identify, plan, exhibit, and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state trade shows or virtual shows targeting out-of-state buyers. These matching grants can mitigate the financial risks associated with exhibiting at trade shows, which provide excellent opportunities to network with wholesale buyers. Applicants may include up to five trade shows in their yearly marketing plan, requesting a total of between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in eligible reimbursements for shows that take place between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024. Businesses may not apply for funding to support attendance at trade shows they have already attended five or more times.

I.II ELIGIBILITY

Vermont-based agricultural and forestry businesses that meet the following criteria are eligible to receive funds through this grant:

1. Business is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State and has been in business for over one year
2. Business or its headquarters are located within Vermont
3. Business has three or more wholesale accounts
4. Business' products meet the [Vermont Local Definition](#) as defined in Act 129

I.III AVAILABLE FUNDS

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has set aside \$50,000 to support Vermont businesses to execute their yearly tradeshow marketing plans. Applications will be reviewed through a competitive process. Eligibility does not guarantee funding will be awarded.

I.IV MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Applicant is required to contribute 50% of each item included in the reimbursement request. For example, if the applicant paid \$3,000 for a booth space at a trade show, their contribution would be \$1,500. Reimbursement will be provided directly to Vermont businesses for marketing materials and exhibiting at eligible events.

- Minimum grant amount: \$2,000
- Maximum grant amount: \$5,000

I.V PROJECT LENGTH

Grant will be awarded for shows taking place between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024. Grants may be amended if grantee changes their anticipated trade show marketing plan. If the marketing plan has changed and grantee has not sought an amendment, the changes may not be approved, and claims may be denied.

SECTION 2: APPLICATION

All applications must be submitted via the WebGrants system at agriculturegrants.vermont.gov. Applications will be accepted from December 15, 2022 at 12:00 PM – January 31, 2023 at 11:59 PM.

Be advised that technical assistance with WebGrants may not be available shortly before deadlines; please plan accordingly.

II.I ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Vermont based agricultural and forestry businesses that meet the following criteria are eligible to receive funds through this grant:

1. Business is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State and has been in business for over one year
2. Business or its headquarters are located within Vermont
3. Business has three or more wholesale accounts
4. Business' products meet the [Vermont Local Definition](#) as defined in Act 129

Trade Show Assistance Grants can mitigate the financial risks associated with exhibiting at trade shows and provide an excellent opportunity to network with wholesale buyers. Applicants should outline all trade show marketing activities for the upcoming year for which they seek reimbursement.

II.II ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

Eligible proposals must assert that:

- Proposed trade show(s) are located outside of Vermont; or if virtual, must target out-of-state buyers.
- Applicant has previously attended trade show no more than 4 times. This grant will fund up to 5 years of attendance at a single trade show.
- The proposed budget demonstrates a minimum of a 1:1 cash match contribution. This grant will reimburse each eligible line item 50%.
- Proposed trade show is in the business to business (wholesale) format. Direct to consumer shows will only be eligible on a case-by-case basis.
- Funding will be used for the following approved expenses:
 - Travel and accommodation expenses
 - Marketing assets and booth design
 - Registration fees (including booth space and educational sessions)
 - Booth fees including furnishings and utilities
 - Shipping/freight
 - Other marketing costs (samples, printing, etc.)

II.III INELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

- Any show already covered by the Food Export Branded Program
- Proposals from applicants who are out of compliance with any federal, state, or local laws or regulations
- Proposals from applicants failing to meet requirements for previous VAAFM grants and/or assistance programs or from individuals or groups that were unable to perform or had performance issues with previous grant obligations with VAAFM
- Proposals from applicants whose products do not meet the [Vermont Local Definition](#) as defined in Act 129
- Reimbursement requests that include labor, food, and/or beverage
- Proposals for trade shows that have been completed prior to 4/1/2023

II.IV APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed by a committee of State of Vermont employees and industry professionals.

II.V KEY DATES

Key dates are subject to change.

December 1, 2022	Request for Applications released
December 15, 2022 – January 31, 2023	Application submission period
January 31, 2023 at 11:59 PM	Application closes
March 1, 2023	Notification of awards

SECTION 3: APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

Applicants may include up to five trade shows in their yearly trade show marketing plan, requesting a total of between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in eligible reimbursements.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The business, trade show(s), products, and expected costs fall within the eligibility requirements listed in this RFA
- Demonstrated readiness to market product, secure leads, and follow up with wholesale buyers
- The overall potential impact of the trade show(s) to the business
- The overall potential impact of the business' attendance at trade show(s) to the Vermont economy

All applications will be reviewed by a committee made up of industry stakeholders and representatives of multiple Vermont state agencies.

SECTION 4: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

IV.I GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENT

Prior to receiving funding, successful applicants must sign a grant agreement with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing VAAFM to monitor the project's progress. The grant agreement will include provisions (terms and conditions) set by the State of Vermont as well as any program-specific requirements. Review [Attachment C - Standard State Provisions and Contracts and Grants](#) (12/15/2017 Revised) for the most recent State of Vermont provisions.

Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, grantee must submit:

- I. A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C of the grant agreement [not required if grantee has a current certificate of insurance on file with the Agency of Agriculture].
- II. A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months [not required if grantee is already a state vendor].
- III. A completed [Act 154 Good Standing Certification](#).
- IV. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable.

IV.II REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Grantees will be eligible to submit claims for reimbursement upon approval of post-show reports according to the following schedule:

- **October 1, 2023 – October 31, 2023:** Reporting period for all shows attended between April 1, 2023 and September 30, 2023
- **April 1, 2024 – April 30, 2024:** Reporting period for all shows attended between October 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024.

Please note that this means there are just two reporting periods during the year. Grantees should not rely on immediate reimbursement of funds to attend trade shows.

Reports should be submitted online in the WebGrants system and must include verification that the marketing activities have been completed, photo documentation showing proof of activities, and relevant data associated with attendance at the various marketing activities such as number and value of both leads and sales. VAAFM may request receipts, proof of purchases, or other documents showing that grant funds have been used to participate in the marketing activities.

Information submitted in any report to the Agency will be a public record. Financial information may only be reported in aggregate.

APPENDIX

I. RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Food Export Northeast Branded Program

Through Exporter Education, Market Entry, and Market Promotion strategies, Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast can help your company understand and discover new exporting opportunities by providing 50% reimbursement for costs incurred to execute eligible marketing and promotional activities. These services are made possible through funding from the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA.

AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

VAAFM offers a menu of [funding opportunities](#) as well as [business planning and assistance](#) resources available to the Vermont agricultural community:

II. CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

A certificate of insurance (COI) is a common requirement for businesses and organizations; most agents are familiar with it. The State of Vermont must be listed as an additional insured on the grantee's policy. We recommend forwarding the insurance requirements below to prospective insurers for accuracy:

Insurance: Before commencing work on this Agreement the Party must provide certificates of insurance to show that the following minimum coverages are in effect. It is the responsibility of the Party to maintain current certificates of insurance on file with the State through the term of this Agreement. No warranty is made that the coverages and limits listed herein are adequate to cover and protect the interests of the Party for the Party's operations. These are solely minimums that have been established to protect the interests of the State.

Workers Compensation: With respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont. Vermont will accept an out-of-state employer's workers' compensation coverage while operating in Vermont provided that the insurance carrier is licensed to write insurance in Vermont and an amendatory endorsement is added to the policy adding Vermont for coverage purposes. Otherwise, the party shall secure a Vermont workers' compensation policy, if necessary, to comply with Vermont law.

General Liability and Property Damage: With respect to all operations performed under this Agreement, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:

Premises - Operations

Products and Completed Operations

Personal Injury Liability

Contractual Liability

The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:

\$1,000,000 Each Occurrence

\$2,000,000 General Aggregate

\$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate

\$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury

Automotive Liability: The Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than \$500,000 combined single limit. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, limits of coverage shall not be less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.

Additional Insured. The General Liability and Property Damage coverages required for performance of this Agreement shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, then the required Automotive Liability coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. Coverage shall be primary and non-contributory with any other insurance and self-insurance.

Notice of Cancellation or Change. There shall be no cancellation, change, potential exhaustion of aggregate limits or non-renewal of insurance coverage(s) without thirty (30) days written prior written notice to the State.

III. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Except for grantee proprietary and personal identifying data, as provided under 1 V.S.A. § 317(c), grantee names, projects, the amount of grant awards, and all other information regarding Trade Show Assistance Grants are considered public information and may be subject to disclosure.

